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ABSTRACT

In the news media and elsewhere, children and young adults are being confronted with dramatic details about a possible nuclear war and its horrendous consequences, resulting in feelings of unease and anxiety. The Malmo School of Education (Sweden) has launched a number of studies concerning educational and psychological research in the peace education field. These are to be carried out over a four-year period and are supported by the Swedish National Board of Education. The project focuses on five principal tasks: (1) inventory and analysis of experiences and related research from various countries; (2) studies of young peoples' conceptions of peace and war, enemy images, ideas on how to work for peace; (3) explorations of viewpoints concerning the role of the school in pursuit of peace preparedness; (4) studies of the way in which schools can treat peace and war and work for peace preparedness in general; and (5) project reports of different kinds. These reports consist of literature analyses and compilations, an international questionnaire study on peace education, pilot studies of conceptions in the field of peace and war, individual interviews, and other publications. The reports already completed in the project are included in a list of 53 references. (PPB)

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"PREPAREDNESS FOR PEACE": A RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT PROJECT IN PROGRESS

Åke Bjerstedt

In news media and elsewhere, children and young people are confronted with dramatic details about a possible nuclear war and its horrendous consequences. They often feel uneasy and anxious about the future. This has made it natural to ask how schools ought to deal with questions of war and peace and pupils' worries. Can schools provide some form of peace-oriented instruction or peace education? How should such instruction be designed?

The aim of the present project, in progress at the Malmö School of Education, is to increase our knowledge of possible ways of helping children and young people through school, to deal constructively with questions of war and peace.

The work of the project involves a variety of tasks: (1) Inventory and analysis of experience of peace education in various countries. (2) Studies of children's and young peoples' conceptions of war and peace. (3) Collection and analysis of viewpoints on the role of schools in pursuit of "peace preparedness". (4) School experiments focusing on practical ways in which schools can organise peace-oriented activities.

Keywords: Educational objectives, global perspectives, peace education, preparedness for peace, research and development project, war.

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

In recent years, questions concerning peace and the nuclear threat have increasingly caught the attention of psychologists and educationalists. One of the main reasons is, of course, that more and more people are beginning to realize the absurdity of today's nuclear-dominated "security policy", which has gradually made the world more and more dangerous - not safer - to live in. In news media and elsewhere, children and young people are being confronted with dramatic details about a possible nuclear war and its horrendous consequences. They frequently feel uneasy and anxious about the future. Surveys confirming this have been presented from various parts of the world; in Sweden, for example, we can refer to studies in the "Future Preparedness as an Educational Objective" project (cf. Ankarstrand-Lindström, 1984b; Bjerstedt, 1986b; Bjurwill, 1986).

This situation makes it more vital than ever to ask how schools should deal with questions of war and peace and pupils' uneasiness. Can the schools of the world do anything to help enhance the possibilities of peaceful co-existence? Can schools provide any form of peace-oriented instruction or peace education? What special objectives ought this to imply? What methods could be relevant?

Questions of this kind are now being asked in many parts of the world. There are several publications in which these problems are debated. There are many conceptual analyses relating to peace and peace education, and quite a few attempts have been made to compile teaching materials in this field. So far, however, relatively few attempts have been made to research the feasibility of adequate peace education or to systematically follow up and evaluate teaching experiments in this area. In other words, there is a substantial need for educational and psychological research and development in the peace education field.

This is the background of a number of studies which we have launched at the Malmö School of Education on the subject of peace education in schools. As an umbrella heading we have used the term "Preparedness for peace". The main body of work is currently being carried out in a four-year project supported by the Swedish National Board of Education and officially entitled "Young People and Peace - Pre-requisites for Peace-Oriented Instruction" (1986/87-1989/90). Around this nucleus, certain supplementary activities are also being conducted by non-project members, and certain preparations for the project have been undertaken as separate assignments.

The overriding aim of the project is to increase our knowledge of possible ways of helping children and young people in school to deal constructively with questions of war and peace, and of promoting "peace preparedness" in general. The expression "increase our knowledge" must also be taken to include such things as "developing more constructive ideas about" and "creating a more balanced picture of".

PRINCIPAL TASKS

The overriding purpose described above could be linked with several different concrete investigative strategies. After introductory planning, however, the work of the project has been made to focus on five principal tasks:

(1) Inventory and analysis of experiences and related research from various countries. First of all, this means finding out in detail what has actually been done and thought on the subject of these questions previously in various countries. There are no established research traditions to go by. Since these questions have been treated in so many different contexts (in various disciplines, with a wide variety of relevance to educational

realities, and through publication in different kinds of reports, proceedings, and periodicals which are not infrequently hard to come by), there would seem to be a great need for an inventory and integration. Apart from the inventory of literature, a supplementary survey by means of an international questionnaire would serve a useful purpose.

(2) Studies of conceptions (conceptions of peace and war, enemy images, ideas on how to work for peace etc.). It is reasonable to suppose that a teacher has a better chance of acting efficiently if he can refer to existing conceptions. There is probably a better chance of making recommendations of a more general kind about the character of educational input at different age levels if one is acquainted with typical ideas. And indeed, our preconceptions about peace and war, about the causes of war and the prospects of peace probably exert quite a tangible influence on our preparedness to act. We should therefore try to expand our knowledge by means of empirical studies of existing ideas. In the first instance, this will involve developmental studies of children and young people. However, the ideas of teachers and teacher-trainees in this area will also be touched on.

(3) Explorations of viewpoints concerning the role of school in pursuit of "peace preparedness"; sub-goal analysis. Part of the task here is to generate ideas through individual interviews. What ideas and, possibly, recommendations can people with a practical or theoretical interest in peace education or other types of peace promotion supply concerning "peace-educating" or "peace-promoting" measures? By way of introduction, the objectives of peace education have been tentatively analysed

in terms of non-violence preparedness, world citizen responsibility, egalitarian attitudes and capacity to search critically for alternatives; these target fields, in turn, have been divided into a number of sub-goals focusing on various cognitive components, value perspectives, and forms of preparedness for action. It could be useful to test and refine this analysis in confrontation, for example, with the opinion-probing activities mentioned above. A list of sub-goals thus tested and further differentiated could then provide support for educational recommendations, the construction of teaching materials, and evaluations.

(4) Studies of the way in which schools treat or can treat peace and war and work for "peace preparedness" in general. Against the background of the material from points 1-3, and in partnership with teachers, certain measures will be studied in minor school experiments which will be evaluated in relation to specified objectives and in close cooperation with those involved. Various approaches have been tried by teachers at different levels, in the form of free experimentation. This is useful, but it would be even more useful if some of these activities were to be undertaken in collaboration with "companion researchers", who would be able to conduct systematic evaluations in order to make better use of the experience gained and to document it for the benefit of other teachers as well. Experiments of roughly this character were started in a previous project (see Ankarstrand-Lindström, 1984a); an expansion of this to other school levels and other procedures is planned in the course of the present project.

(5) Project reports of different kinds. The aim of the project is to generate several different

kinds of "product": (a) bibliographical compilations with commentaries ("reader's guides"); (b) empirical research reports on different sub-studies in the project; (c) a concluding theoretical analysis in which an attempt is made to build a model for the field of "peace-oriented instruction" which can serve to integrate the work already done and hopefully also furnish guidance for continuing research in the field; (d) publications which can provide input material for discussion and studies in this field by teachers and teacher-trainees. In the latter case, plans have been made both for "minor publications" on various parts of the project and for a more comprehensive "teacher's guide" at the end of the project.

Perhaps it should be added that part of the detailed content of tasks 2, 3 and 4 will be governed by the results of the analyses in task 1. This is in keeping with the step-by-step exploratory character of the work. Detailed predefinition of the strategy for subsequent phases of the project has therefore not been judged desirable.

PROGRAM AND METHODS

The preliminary program of the project work can be approximately illustrated as follows:

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4
Task 1	xxxx	x	x	
Task 2	xx	xxxx	xx	
Task 3	xx	xxxx	xx	
Task 4		x	xxxx	xx
Task 5	x	x	x	xxxx

The larger the number of crosses beside a particular task during a particular working year, the heavier the

work input is intended to be. To some extent, the different tasks have been planned to proceed in parallel tracks during the course of the project, but at the same time it is natural for tasks 1-3 to predominate during the first half of the project, for task 4 to start comparatively late, and for most of the reporting work (task 5) to be done during the final phase.

As has already indicated, the methods used will be of many different kinds. Task 1 will involve manual and computer-aided information retrieval as well as bibliographical and analytical presentations. An international questionnaire is also included. In task 2, we will be testing a number of different techniques for studying complex ideas. Here the project will also to some extent be concerned with the development and testing of methods. Interviews of different kinds will be the principal method used for task 3. In task 4, a series of educational studies using both formative and summative evaluation has been planned.

REPORTS SO FAR

The minor publications and reports compiled so far in the project (or as preparations) are listed in the references at the end of this presentation. Readers requiring further information about our work are referred to those publications, which - with the exception of Bjerstedt, 1985a and 1986b - are obtainable from our department (address: Department of Educational and Psychological Research, att.: B. Frank, School of Education, Box 23501, S-200 45 Malmö, Sweden).

At the time of writing, the four-year project is in its second year. Naturally, the publications issued so far therefore cover only part of the entire problem field of the project. Finally, by way of guidance, here follow some further particulars about the content and character of some of our publications.

(a) Inventory and analysis of literature, compilation of guides to literature. As can be seen from the program, the first main task of the project is to carry out an inventory, analysis and documentation of international literature in this field. The aids we have compiled are of three main types:

(1) A simple bibliographical conspectus is included in Bjerstedt, 1985b. Examples of various kinds of literature have been listed and classified with reference to their content. Short introductory commentaries are provided (in English and Swedish), but the individual references are not annotated.

(2) In other reports we have collected short summaries of reports, books and articles in the field. As part of a previous project, we compiled a collection of abstracts of this kind in English, mainly referring to works published between 1966 and 1975 (Bjerstedt & Gustafsson, 1977). We have now compiled a similar, though more comprehensive, presentation of abstracts in English, referring to works published between 1976 and 1986 (Bjerstedt & Gustafsson, 1986). The former publication describes about 90 works, the latter some 300. A collection of abstracts in Swedish, in which more emphasis was put on Swedish publications, was subsequently published in a separate report (Bjerstedt, Gustafsson & Rosenqvist, 1987).

(3) Finally, we have selected a number of characteristic and interesting works of international literature for more detailed comment and analysis in Swedish. So far, thirteen such analyses have been published (Berg, 1986a, 1986b; Ekstrand, 1988; Rosenqvist, 1986a, 1986b, 1987a, 1987b, 1987c; Svensson, 1986, 1987a, 1987b, 1988; Åström, 1985). They cover, among other things, peace

education in Austria, Czechoslovakia, India, the Netherlands, Poland, Switzerland, the United States, and West Germany.

(b) An international questionnaire study. An international questionnaire was circulated in order to obtain a somewhat more comprehensive and up-to-date picture of experiences in the field of peace education around the world. This was addressed to the ministries of education (or the corresponding school authorities) in different countries. The recipients were asked to answer a number of questions about the status of peace education in their own country, and we also expressed a desire to see relevant texts and documents. A relatively detailed presentation of the results of the questionnaire is given in English in Bjerstedt, 1988b; briefer presentations in English and German can be found in Bjerstedt, 1986c and 1987d. Certain parts of the abundant material in the form of books, reports, newspaper articles etc. which we received in connection with this international questionnaire will, however, be further examined and reported on separately. One of the main impressions of the questionnaire study was that the role of peace questions in schools is currently attracting a great deal of interest in many countries. Ten or fifteen years ago, discussions of peace education in schools were uncommon, whereas today the school policy documents of several countries explicitly refer to peace education as an important task for schools. A growing implementation - and "legalization" - of peace education in the schools of the world can be observed.

(c) Pilot studies of conceptions in the field of peace and war. Certain pilot studies of ideas in our problem field have been started; here we can refer to Ankarstrand-Lindström & Bjerstedt, 1987

(conceptions among teacher trainees) and Magnusdóttir, 1986 (conceptions among younger children). Various instruments useful in such studies are illustrated and discussed in Bjerstedt, 1988a.

(d) Individual interviews with experts and parties interested in the peace education/peace research sector. We have started a series of interviews with people who have taken a special, active interest in peace education and/or peace research. Some of these interviews will be published in extenso, with the approval of the interviewees. So far, seventeen of these full-length interviews have made their way into our publications (see, for example, Jensen, Øberg & The Project "Preparedness for Peace", 1987; Reardon & The Project "Preparedness for Peace", 1987; Wallensteen, Wiberg & The Project "Preparedness for Peace", 1987).

(e) Other publications. Some of our publications have been of an analytical, argumentative or illustrative character (e.g., Bjerstedt, 1985a, 1986f; Carlander, 1988). Among other things, they discuss which sub-goals we should pursue in the course of a peace-oriented education as well as current ideas and illustrations concerning relevant classroom activities. Mention can also be made of a brief presentation of debate and research and development in Sweden related to peace-oriented school activities (Bjerstedt, 1986a).

In the list of references below, we have also included some studies which are not part of our main project but which deal with the same general problem area and have been published in the series of reports by our department. They include two reports on peace-oriented work in pre-school education (Carlander-Larsson, 1985; Wahlström, 1988); a study of educational drama as a means of

influencing empathy and attitudes towards deviant groups among grade 8 students (Grünbaum, 1986); and a summary of the findings from a questionnaire on peace instruction in Swedish teacher training (Rudvall, 1986).

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